

VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
James Cusick Conference Room, Windham Regional Career Center,
80 Atwood Street (off Fairground Road), Brattleboro
October 16, 2012

The State Board of Education shall sustain a vision of high skills, creative thinking, and love of knowledge and learning for every student by setting education policy that ensures student achievement in a safe and healthy learning environment.

Approved MINUTES

Present:

State Board of Education (SBE):

Stephan Morse, Chair; Kathy Larsen, vice chair; Brian Vachon; Lachlan Francis; Laura Harris; Sean Marie-Oller; Bill Mathis; Don Collins

Department of Education (DOE):

Armando Vilaseca; John Fischer; Bill Talbott; Mark Oettinger; Deb Price; Vaughn Altemus; Karin Edwards; Carol King; Angela Ross;

Others:

Ron Stahley, Superintendent, WSESU; Nancy Talbott, Interim Superintendent – Windham Southwest SU; Nancy Dike, Windham; Jerry Dike, Windham; Jean Schultz, Teacher - The Academy School; Andy Pacciuli, Principal – The Academy School; Laura B. Millington, VSBPE/Arlington; Wendell Coleman, Londonderry; David Coughlin, Director WRCC; Bob Woodworth, Chair, BUHS Board; Julie Peterson, ESA/Southeast VT Learning Collaborative, Brattleboro, Anne Doran, WRCC Counselor; Rhonda Winegarner, BUHS Counselor; Alexa Kay, former WRCC student; Tom Yahn, Dave Kauffman,

Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Morse called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m., welcomed everyone to Southern Vermont, and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Morse called on Ron Stahley, Superintendent, who welcomed the public and thanked Lachlan Francis for advocating for the Board meeting to be held at the Windham Regional Career Center.

Item B: Roll Call and Introductions

Chair and Board members introduced themselves as did audience members.

Item C: Announcements & Updates

Collins advised that he recently attended the NASBE annual meeting in Chicago. Collins served on the Government Affairs committee, and participated in discussions about time on task vs. longer school year, creativity in terms of afterschool and summer school programs (optional vs. mandatory depending on level), poverty, and the challenges of public transportation. He encouraged other board members to attend future NASBE meetings as it would be good for Vermont to have a voice. Collin Collins also spoke to the new

nutritional guidelines, noting there was discussion at NASBE about the challenges other states are facing, Collins agrees it's important to instill healthy eating habits at the elementary and middle school levels.

Item D: Public to be Heard

No one signed up to speak during this time.

Item E: Updates

Chair Morse reported that he has been in contact with the Governor's office about Judy Livingston's vacancy. The Governor's office has received several applications; he hopes the Governor will appoint by the November meeting. He reminded the Board that there are two upcoming vacancies at the end of February: Kathy Larsen and Brian Vachon. Morse gave an update on the Agency Secretary search, advised that the applications were due October 5th, 25 applications were received, many qualified candidates. The search committee will be meeting with educational partners and Susan Bartlett at the end of month/early November to interview five finalists, and anticipated having a list of recommendations to the Board by the December meeting to review. The names of three finalists will then be forwarded to the Governor.

Item F: [Act 98 of 2012](#) Transition Planning & Search Committee Update

Chair Morse reminded the Board that as of January, 2013 they will need to be adequately staffed once the Department changes to an Agency. The FY 13 budget adjustment request is for an Administrative position, a Policy Analyst, and budget allowance for legal services. Oller questioned if budget includes travel/conferences for the Board. Mathis advised that the NASBE trips cost approximately \$1500; Collins agreed. Talbott advised there is an allowance in the budget. Oller suggested that the travel budget should be increased to \$10k (currently \$6k) if more than one Board member is going to be involved in conferences.

Motion: Oller moved, Collins seconded, that the State Board of Education approve the FY 13 budget adjustment request and the FY 14 proposed budget request. Collins moved, Mathis seconded, that the budget be increased to \$10k totaling \$260,918. Both motions passed unanimously (6-0).
Chair Morse will contact Susan Bartlett/Governor's office with the budget information.

Item G: Commissioner's Update

Commissioner Vilaseca thanked Superintendent Stahley, Brattleboro High School, and the WRCC for hosting the SBE meeting; he advised the Board he will be meeting with Stahley after today's meeting to work on language regarding dual-enrollment to present to the house ed committee this legislative season. Vilaseca advised the Board that he was at Champlain Elementary for the presentation of the Milken Education Award (MEA) to Matt Hajdun; the Milken Foundation was there to present Matt with a \$25,000 check. Vilaseca was impressed with the ceremony at the elementary school, advising the Board that they incorporated Spanish into the curriculum – he reminded the Board of previous discussions of second language requirement in all schools. Vilaseca advised the board that the 2014 Vermont Teacher of the Year will be announced next month – allowing another opportunity to recognize the great work of teachers. He spoke to the Department's reorganization, efforts to incorporate all programs/divisions to work together; the bigger picture – school support, school effectiveness, and closing the achievement gap. Vilaseca spoke to issues of poverty, summer school, summer reading loss, year round school, the 21st Century learning program, afterschool programs,

young adults in incarceration, pre-k, early education birth-3, new nutrition requirements, National School Lunch week, and his recent visits to Stowe, Ripton and Lincoln Schools where wonderful education is going on, and commended the work that food service staff are doing. The Board and Commissioner discussed changes in the school lunch program, specifically portion sizes – student needs and situations vary, overall consensus is that the changes are positive.

The Board and Deputy Commissioner Fischer discussed 21st Century skills (21C), transportation in rural areas, school partnerships, budget constraints, Title 1, pre-school efforts, and early ed funding. The Board agreed to have richer discussions at the November and December meetings.

Chair Morse called recess at 9:50 a.m.

Chair Morse reconvened the meeting at 9:59 a.m.

Discussion Items

Item H: 2012-13 Priority #1: Addressing the Achievement Gap

Chair Morse stated that in March the Board initiated a process, working with the Department and partners, to establish nine priorities for the Board to focus on. Morse advised that the Achievement Gap is a shared priority among the educational community. Deputy Commissioner Fischer introduced the discussion, topics to be covered: what the Department has done, what the Department will do, and what the Department will focus on to close the achievement gap. Fischer spoke to flexible pathways, specifically dual enrollment and Brattleboro's model of early college, advising that the Department will continue to work toward the creation of more flexible pathways for students. Fischer introduced Debi Price and Karin Edwards, Department of Education, Jean Schultz and Andy Paciulli, Brattleboro's Academy School.

Edwards presented [*Promising Practices for Closing the Achievement Gap*](#). Edwards talked about what the Department has done for the last three years: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), highlighted research the Department has done in the schools that have instilled PBIS in terms of gains in NECAP scores, cutting back lost time (due to behavior/discipline issues), and recent grant for a five year MTSS project. Edwards advised that the Department created a field guide for the VT Multi-Tiered System of Support Response to Intervention & Instruction (MTSS-RtII) with a group of general educators, principals, and special educators. The field guide features ten core principles based on five components: Systems, Assessment, Instruction, Intervention, and Collaboration. Price spoke to Educational Support Systems, BEST Summer Institute, PBIS trainings, MTSS, and the work that the Department is doing in terms of outreach to the schools. Oller questioned what types of schools are participating, Edwards advised elementary and middle schools, noted that the Department will be bringing in a national expert to help develop a model for high schools.

Academy School principal Andy Paciulli and second grade teacher Jean Schultz presented [*The Academy Story*](#). In 2006 they were a high poverty (57% free and reduced school lunch)/low achieving school (at least 50% not meeting standards), and they had the lowest reading and math scores in the district. Paciulli spoke to the achievement gap, and the challenges they faced. In 2012 they had the highest math scores in district, second highest reading scores in the district, and students with disabilities demonstrated significant gains in proficiency levels. Paciulli spoke to special education students, the importance of catching kids prior to third grade – before they fall (reading is key), staff is now collaborative – seeing the big picture, the whole school,

not just individual classroom. Paciulli and Shultz spoke to the change within the school: the learning experiences, self-evaluation, school culture, leadership, looking at data – becoming results-driven, using best practices and formative assessments – consistently checking in with the kids, skills block (intervention/enrichment), response to intervention during and after school, parent involvement, ultimately putting the children first with a “no excuse” belief system. Paciulli spoke to buy-in vs. embrace, stating that the teachers need to see the results – once they see it, they embrace it, which creates a shift in attitudes and culture. Teachers come to work because they want to make a difference, if you can prove to them that it will work than they will embrace it. Paciulli and Shultz invited questions from the Board. Superintendent Stahley spoke to Paciulli’s commitment and leadership, dedicated teachers like Jean, and the school wide support. He also spoke to ARRA funding which they used to fund literacy, math, and data coaches (huge success), the importance of summer school programs, and the challenges in terms of funding.

The Board had discussion around the media, finding opportunities to share more of what the Board is doing, highlighting positive stories.

Commissioner Vilaseca advised the Board that he is concerned with the idea that “things aren’t working”, finding the balance of flexibility, reminding the Board that certain requirements are by law – things neither the Department nor the Board can control. Vilaseca emphasized the important thing to remember is that the Department’s purpose is to support the schools and to help them with the challenges they are facing, further stating that he believes in the things that the schools are doing, that is why he invited the Academy School to present, because ultimately it’s the schools who are educating our children and the Department supports the schools; he emphasized the fact that it’s a collaborative effort, that we need to allow the time for changes to be made – it’s never going to be immediate results.

Chair Morse called recess at 11:35 a.m.

Chair Morse reconvened the meeting at 11:41 a.m.

Item I: Windham Regional Collegiate High School

Ron Stahley, Alexa Kay, Tom Yahn, Dave Kauffman, Rhonda Winegarner, and Ann Doran introduced themselves and presented [*What Is the Windham Regional Collegiate High School \(WRCHS\)*](#). Stahley spoke to VTC/CCV relationships, dual-enrollment, and the support of Department in terms of Perkins Funding and innovation grants which allowed the dual-credit program to launch. Kay, a graduate of the WRCHS program, spoke to the dual credit courses, Accuplacer, taking personal responsibility for education, the college course load being more manageable because of her experiences at WRCHS. She spoke about the international business program, making the connection from textbook to the working world, and her capstone project –a business portfolio. Lachlan Francis, BUHS student, spoke to his dual-enrollment courses at WRCHS, project work, and student organizations.

Stahley spoke to WRCHS courses and their partnership with the Running Start Program in New Hampshire. Weingarner, guidance counselor, shared student success stories, the importance of reaching kids who don’t view themselves as “college material”, first generation college students, and the collegiate high school. Door spoke to Career and College Readiness.

Yahn spoke to their mission statement; the real power of the program is to reach the students who wouldn't have thought of going on to college. He spoke to the importance of nurturing kids on how to "do" college and to understand that they will be successful. Yahn advised of the student/teacher partnership and connection with college staff; one of the program goals is to create a pipeline of Vermont high school students going to local Vermont colleges and staying in Vermont as part of our workforce and economy.

Chair Morse called lunch at 12:15 p.m.

Chair Morse reconvened the meeting at 1:26 p.m.

Item J: Act 156 Overview/Act 153 Update

Vaughn Altemus gave the Board an overview of Act 156/Act 153, advising there hasn't been much change in the status of activities in terms of REDs or mergers since the last update. Chair Morse asked what the Board can do to encourage supervisory unions to look at consolidations; Altemus spoke to a variety of grants and incentives related to mergers and RED studies. The Board discussed the benefits and challenges of mergers, the perception of local control, and school budgets.

Item K: FY 14 Budget Development

Deputy Commissioner & CFO Talbott advised that the Department is in the process of putting together projections for FY14 (which begins July 1, 2013). Chair Morse questioned the Board's role in the future in terms of the Agency's budget (after the January transition from Department to Agency) and discussed its role in the Department/Agency's budget if an adjustment was made to the budget. Talbott advised that essentially the budget is a level-funded budget; the Department will be meeting with Jim Reardon, Commissioner of Finance, to discuss the budget in detail. Chair Morse encouraged Talbott / Department to continue to follow current process, working together to review the budget before submitting to the Governor.

Item L: Legislative Agenda Development

Commissioner Vilaseca, Bill Talbott, and Mark Oettinger briefly discussed nine topics: Home Schooling (simplify process), Driver Ed (licensure), Statewide School Choice (annual cap vs. cumulative cap), CTE Choice (to follow high school choice), 16 VSA 241 (Superintendents); 16 VSA 1708 (Teacher licensing investigations); 16 VSA 1071(e) (language/technical change re regional calendars); 16 VSA 706g (Union School District formation); 16 VSA 4029(a) and (b) (RED creation - technical change in language in terms of the school building returned to town). They also spoke to technical changes, substantive changes, and the Miscellaneous Ed bill in terms of legislation. The Board identified school choice and home schooling as topics they would like to discuss further at future meetings. Commissioner Vilaseca advised the Board that the Department is working with Hunger Free Vermont to move all free and reduced lunch population to free lunch, as he feels this is very important in terms of working to close the achievement gap.

Action Items

Item M: Consent Agenda

Chair Morse advised the Board that there are two items to be approved on the consent agenda: minutes of September 18, 2012 SBE Meeting and Schools in Commissioner's Required Action Status. Deputy

Commissioner Fischer elaborated on technical assistance, school improvement vs. school effectiveness, the Department's recent reorganization to focus on support to schools. Commissioner Vilaseca and Debi Price advised that the Department has been providing grants for schools to hire trained coaches. Mathis requested further discussion about supporting schools at a future meeting.

Motion: Chair Morse called the vote; Oller motioned, Vachon seconded, that the State Board of Education to approve the consent agenda items: minutes of September 18, 2012 SBE Meeting and to approve the continued technical assistance for the schools in corrective action. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Item N: Superintendent Vacancy Study: Windham Southwest SU

Commissioner Vilaseca advised that he approved Windham Southwest's request for an interim Superintendent. Nancy Talbott, Interim Superintendent, spoke to recent discussions with a neighboring supervisory union

Motion: Oller motioned, Vachon seconded, the State Board of Education vote to place Windham Southwest SU under consideration for a supervisory union boundary change and permit the Supervisory Union Board to hire a superintendent of schools for up to two years while the study is completed. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Further, the Board stipulated that WWSU Board notify the Department of Education, within five business days following its December 2012 meeting, as to whether it would prefer to have the Department conduct the study or whether it will conduct the study itself. The timeline for completion of the study is April 30, 2014.

Chair Morse asked if there are any other issues that the members of the Board would like to discuss. Oller requested future discussion about "corrective action" – referenced the Academy School, they are doing amazing things but are still on "the list" and they are not the only school facing this type of situation. The Board and Commissioner discussed federal regulations, finding the best ways to support schools, and how to change the language (failing schools) as it is not an accurate portrayal of our schools. Chair Morse advised next meeting is will be held in the Burlington area on November 13, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.

Item O: Adjourn

Motion: 3:12 p.m., Oller moved, seconded by Mathis, to adjourn the October 16, 2012 meeting of the State Board of Education. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Minutes recorded by Angela Ross
Minutes prepared by Carol King